

2i6 The Story of My Life

high fortune,* and ' Where spirits resort' were simply incomparable. . . . Your mother looked very radiant last night. I told her how proud she should be, and she was. . . . The play will be, I believe, a mighty go/ for the beauty of it is bewildering. I am sure of this, for it dumbfounded them all last night. Now you—we—must make our task a delightful one by doing everything possible to make our acting easy and comfortable. We are in for a long run."

To this letter he added a very human postscript: " I have determined not to see a paper for a week—I know they'll cut me up, and I don't like it! "

Yes, he *was* cut up, and he didn't like it, but a few people knew. One of them was Mr. Frankfort Moore, the novelist, who wrote to me of this " revealing Romeo, full of originality and power/ "

" Are you affected by adverse criticism ? " I was asked once. I answered then and I answer now, that legitimate adverse criticism has always been of use to me if only because it " gave me to think " furiously. Seldom does the outsider, however talented, as a writer and observer, recognise the actor's art, and often we are told that we are acting best when we are showing the works most plainly, and denied any special virtue when we are concealing our method. Professional criticism is most helpful, chiefly because it induces one to criticise oneself. " Did I give that impression to any one ? Then there must have been something wrong somewhere." The " something " is often a perfectly different blemish from that to which

the critic drew attention.

Unprofessional criticism is often more
helpful still, but
alas ! one's friends are **to** one's faults more
than a little
kind, and to one's virtues very kind! It is
through letters
from people quite unknown to me that I have
sometimes